

DULUTH AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION MEETING
Monday, May 19, 2008 - 5:00 p.m.
Room 402 City Hall

Members Present: Michele Gordon, Warner Wirta, Tony LaDeaux, Donna Ennis, Ricky DeFoe, Joy Dorscher, Ron Boshey

Excused Absent: Dr. Bob Powless

Absent: Bea Kitto

Staff present: Kathie Severson

Others present: See sign-in sheets

CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Meeting with Duluth Public School District moved to Community Public Forum. Motion to approve the agenda by Warner Wirta, seconded by Joy Dorscher. Agenda stands as approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 21, 2008 MEETING:

On page 2 change the name Kyle to Carl. Motion to approve the corrected minutes by Joy Dorscher, seconded by Ricky DeFoe. April 21, 2008 minutes stand as approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 28, 2008 SPECIAL MEETING:

Motion to approve the minutes by Joy Dorscher, seconded by Ricky DeFoe. April 28, 2008 minutes stand as approved.

COMMUNITY PUBLIC FORUM / OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

Meeting with Superintendent

Joe Hill, Assistant Superintendent Duluth Public Schools, standing in for Dr. Dixon, presented information – Six learning areas to measure success. 1) Student Achievement. 2) Whole Student Development. 3) Resource Management. 4) Community Engagement. 5) Staff Learning and Growing. 6) Partnerships. Handouts included Duluth's Promise of Educational Excellence: Long Range Program Planning flyer and a Feedback Survey that each person was asked to complete and return to the school district.

Michele asked how teachers demonstrate multi-cultural awareness. Joe responded that the percentage of staff of color should represent the percentage of students of color.

Warner believes positive changes school-wide for Native youth is happening. Native students reading and writing scores are improving. He commended Joe for this progress. Joe stated that Math is still a struggle for Native youth.

Joy is concerned about segregation with the redistricting plan. Joe said it is important that dialogue continue along these lines to address the inequity. There is a lower bar for students of color.

Ricky questioned how the “gap” can be closed given the No Child Left Behind policy.

Joy is worried about Native students being counseled out of higher education. She has seen success with Native Americans in Medicine (NAM) program at UMD in the summer.

Tony is concerned about the continuing negative racial atmosphere in the Duluth School District. Students that left the district for other schools have fared better. The “carhart” group will continue to thrive under the current Red Plan in his opinion.

Ricky again mentioned “lowering the bar” for Native students. Joe said to recognize this but not to think the district is okay with this.

Michele questioned the methods of graduation standards tests. Does the test taking accommodate students of color? The answer is no.

Warner stated that Native students need accommodations when test taking.

Indigenous Peoples Day

Blair Powless – Indigenous Peoples Day. He has been attending St. Scholastica for the past two semesters. He is wondering if Mayor Ness will recognize the renaming of Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day. He is willing to approach and present the Mayor with his opinion that this recognition should continue. A Motion to support Blair and put the document on letterhead was made. The Motion passed.

Renee Van Nett - presented about HIV prevention outreach in the Native community. Also is assisting Native women and youth to leave prostitution.

Ricky wondered what men in the community could do to help. Renee said it helps to talk openly about it and not keep it secretive.

Warner Wirta – Lisa Augustine from the Board of Spirit Mountain should be invited to the next Commission meeting.

Ernest Diver - An Adult Foster Home for ventilation care that provides care to Native Adults appears to be disrespectful to our Native American people. The staff is possibly abusive. Ernest was encouraged to report this to the vulnerable adult unit at St. Louis County.

OLD BUSINESS:

Barrels in Lake Superior update was tabled to the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:**Meeting with Superintendent -**

Joe Hill spoke in place of Superintendent. (See Community Public Forum)

Review ISD 709 Desegregation Report -

Donna Ennis distributed the Integration Equity Framework Statement.

Bob Grytdal and **Cruz Mendota** facilitated a discussion on the ISD 709 Desegregation Report. 8 of 23 people that worked on the Desegregation Report were Native American. Commissioners have an opportunity to give input into the document. The Human Rights Commission needs about 5 members. **Cruz** updated us as to the status of retention and recruitment of people of color in the school district. (The feedback form was distributed for Commissioners to submit ideas/concerns to Joe Hill.)

Further discussion of progress on related Education Issues -

No further discussion.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, UPCOMING EVENTS AND COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Joy Dorscher Has a cute Granddaughter.

Michele Gordon She likes how people feel comfortable bringing issues to the Commission.

Warner Wirta Is promoting Mesaba Park as a cheap place to stay. Finn Fest is approaching soon from July 23 through July 27th.

Ron Boshey He has a new Grandson that was born on Saturday.

Tony LaDeaux Is disappointed with education in this community for Native youth.

Ricky DeFoe The Native community needs to come together to advocate for Indian education rights.

Donna Ennis Gathering of Women is at FDL on 5/21 and 5/22. Flyers are available by the door.

NEXT MEETING/DATE/LOCATION: June 16, 2008 in Room 402 City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:30 p.m.

Handouts included:

Duluth School District: Duluth's Promise of Educational Excellence: Long Range Program Planning flyer and a Feedback Survey for Commissioners to complete

Aids Information Duluth packet with program and contact information

Women's Wellness Gathering flyer information

Memorandum from Warner Wirta to Commission members